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Lawn&Garden Marketing

MARCH 1986

Reports on: Spring '86 ad plans

Retail competition • Strategic consumers

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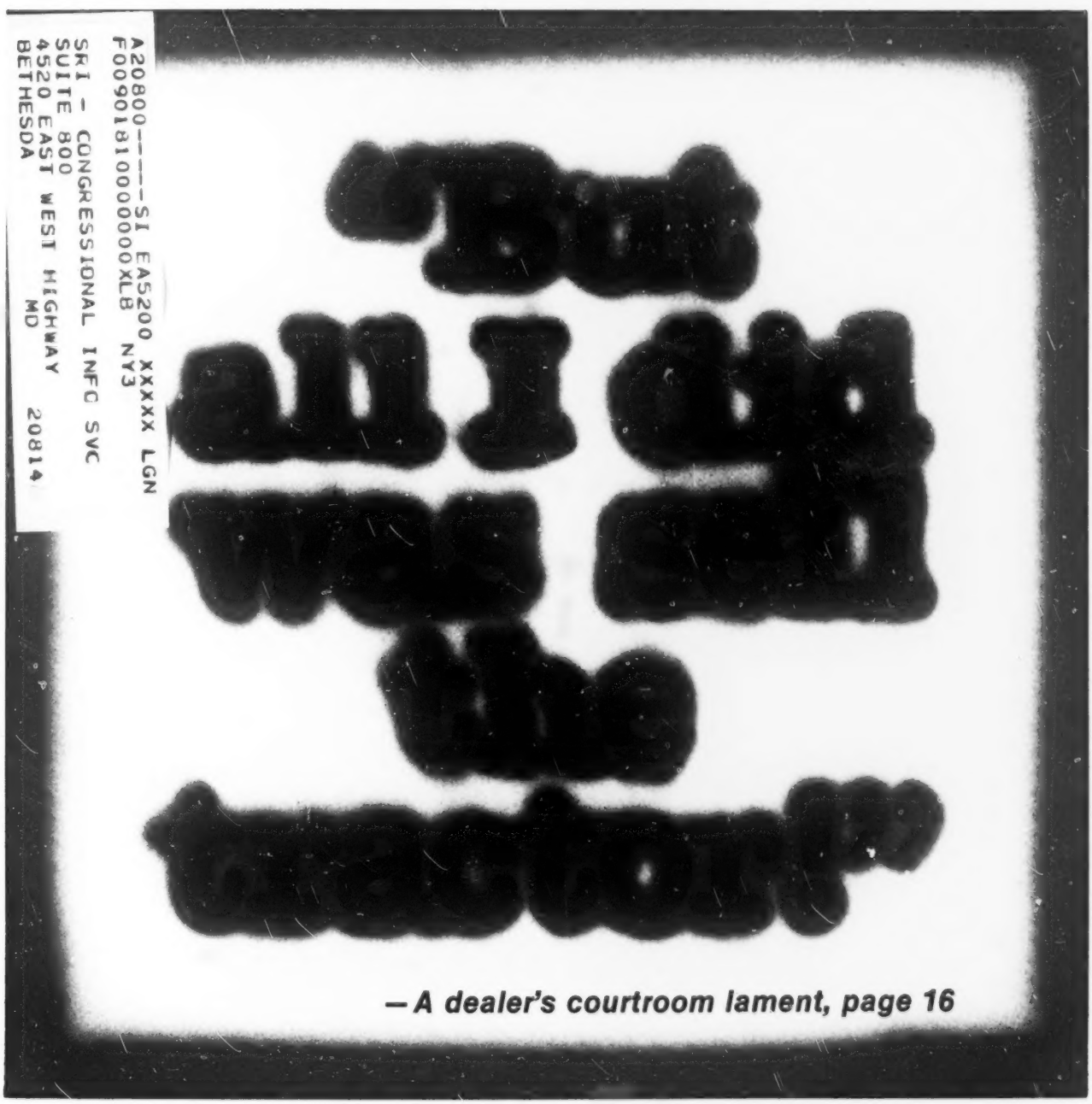

—A dealer's courtroom lament, page 16

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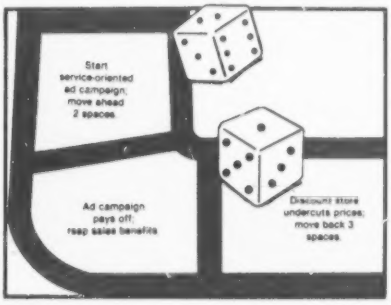
Lawn&Garden Marketing

The merchandising magazine for lawn, garden and leisure living products.

MARCH 1986 VOL. 25, No. 3 PUBLISHED 10 TIMES ANNUALLY


Start service-oriented ad campaign; move ahead 2 spaces.
Ad campaign pays off; reap sales benefits.
Discount store undercuts prices; move back 3 spaces.

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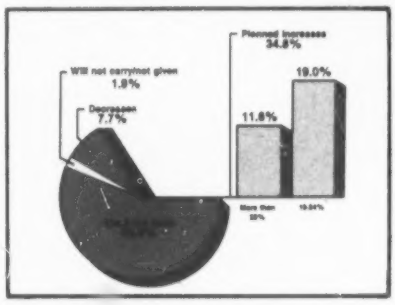

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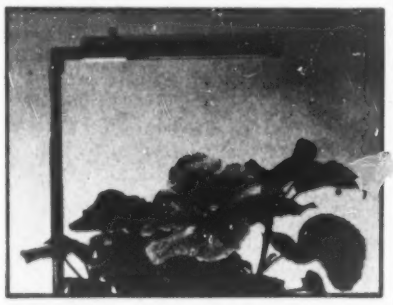

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- **'86 National Hardware Show update**
- **Fall sales trends: a 5-year look**
- **Winter Product Movement Report**

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Strategic consumers

A new study shows that today's consumers are more pragmatic, placing increased emphasis on value and directing leisure pursuits, including gardening, into narrowed areas of expertise.

By Mike Greene

More so than in the past, consumers today are interested in developing knowledge and skills in selected leisure areas, including gardening. But they are more pragmatic about where they buy their gardening products and take a strategic approach to shopping.

Maybe you've already noticed that a growing number of consumers of lawn and garden products and services are not responding to price-cut advertising, brand names, union labels, and "Made in America" stickers.

As you talk to them, you get the feeling that they are perhaps more skeptical than before, more pragmatic about purchases, less swayed by your expert advice or opinion. Consumers with these attitudes and buying habits are showing up everywhere and they represent a new generation of lawn and garden buyers.

The January 1986 issue of *Lawn & Garden Marketing* described this generation of baby boomers. You may have already looked at the demographics of the baby boomers—where they live, how old they are, how much money they make.

The demographics are impressive. They tell us that the first baby boomers, now turning 40, are leading an age group that will add 28 percent to the size of the 30-to-49 age group over the next 10 years. Baby boomers represent the large majority of first-time homeowners and will be the population segment most likely to engage in lawn and garden activities.

Most importantly, studies of boomer lifestyles are helping us understand more about who they are so we can begin to shape our business plans to correspond with the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and buying habits of the major consumer market segment of the late '80s and '90s.

Findings of recent studies make it clear that dependence on the last generation's marketing ideas—"location, location, and location," for example—may well miss the big-but-moving target of this important consumer group. One study in particular, "How Changing Lifestyles in America are Impacting the Garden Industry," addresses this concern.

Commissioned by *Rodale's Organic Gardening*, this study is the latest in a series of studies on social change by Yankelovich, Skelly, and White Inc. Some highlights from this study follow.

The accompanying article is based on the latest in a continuing series of studies of social change and consumer buying habits. Titled "How Changing Lifestyles in America are Impacting the Gardening Industry," this study was conducted by the nationally known analysts of social change and consumer behavior, Yankelovich, Skelly, and White Inc., under the sponsorship of Rodale's Organic Gardening *magazine.*

In releasing it to LGM, *Tom Stoneback, associate publisher of* Rodale's Organic Gardening, *cited the report for providing a historical perspective beginning in the post-World War II era, and chronicling consumer attitudes through the decade of the '80s.*

Most importantly for the lawn and garden industry, Stoneback says the study "forecasts how consumer trends will affect the gardening industry in the years ahead," and identifies marketing mandates for manufacturers and retailers alike.

The study is an in-depth think piece. Our condensed report by writer Mike Greene highlights the study. A copy of the complete study may be obtained from: Tom Stoneback, associate publisher, Rodale's Organic Gardening, *33 E. Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18049.*

Boomer lifestyles

The boomers' lifestyles, of course, did not spring full-blown out of thin air. Their lifestyles do not represent faddish ways invented by Madison Avenue types or celebrity entertainers. Boomers are the products of parents of the late '40s and '50s whose formula for a successful lifestyle was based on what has been called the "Protestant work ethic," a view of life based on generous doses of self-sacrifice, self-denial, conformity and devotion to home, family and job.

In the '50s, the lawn and garden industry benefited from the "home-base" ties of boomers' parental value system. Supported by an expanding economy, the '50s was a period of unparalleled new home construction, stimulated by a population that was more than two-thirds "middle class."

As homeownership became feasible for more people, a good-looking lawn and garden became a widespread status symbol. The symbol was one of the signs of a new wave of what a well-known economist labeled "affluence." And the "affluent society" of the '60s began to look for the "full, rich life" outside the traditional framework of social and other traditional motivators.

The "me" generation gave rise to a "leisure ethic" in the 1970s and to lifestyles that emphasized self-fulfillment and a feeling of one's entitlement to a better quality of life.

Key studies of social change by the Yankelovich, Skelly, and White organization showed that many of the "seekers" of the '70s did not "find themselves" on the path to happiness.

By the late '70s and early '80s, consumers were adjusting to the fact that they could not do it all, have it all and be it all. Studies showed a decided shift of consumer interest from trying out the novelty of many ways to experience leisure time, to an approach that emphasized narrowing the focus of interest, and selecting fewer and more achievable interest goals.

A core market, comprised of persons with a serious interest in developing knowledge and skills in selected leisure areas, emerged. Then in 1979 survey data began to reflect a renewed appreciation of the home as:

- a place of refuge from stressful work and relationships;
- a source of diversified gratification opportunities;
- a symbol of success in a competitive business world; and
- a focus of interest for leisure-time activities.

Sound familiar? No, it's not a throwback to the days of the Protestant work ethic. Nor does it mean the abandonment of the search for self-fulfillment

continued...

Strategic
...continued

of the '60s and '70s. The boomers have found new means of achieving a blend of values inherited from the last three decades. Simply, they have re-invented pragmatism.

The pragmatic consumer

The pragmatic consumer is someone who is:

- looking at all the options;
- not tied to any product, brand, or retail outlet;
- not locked into bargain hunting for the lowest price;
- feeling strongly that there are a variety of ways to make the most of available time, money and effort and come up with a "best" result.

The pragmatic consumer not only wants to feel good about his purchase of his lawn and garden products and services, he also wants to feel that the best value is being received and that the spending transaction has rewarded the mind and spirit.

This brand of pragmatism has led to the emergence of today's strategic consumer—"a consumer distinguished by a case-by-case approach to the marketplace," in the words of the study.

"The strategic consumer has made quality the keystone of the 'smart shopper' philosophy. Quality, in fact, is the one (and perhaps the only) aspect of the strategic approach that takes on the character of a 'moral imperative.' "

If the moral imperative of the '40s and '50s was, "I've got to do the best I can," the moral imperative of the late '80s and '90s may be, "I've got to do the best and get the best I can."

The strategic consumer's interest and involvement in gardening in the late '80s is likely to be influenced by trends in economic motivations, food supply, food concerns, the leisure climate, the importance of a well-kept lawn or garden, physical fitness trends and time spent at home.

Motivations for gardening

It is by no means certain that consumers will turn to gardening as an economy measure in response to rising food costs. For example, during the recession of 1974-75, many consumers cut back on expenditures for food and clothing rather than on luxuries, reflecting their "I deserve it" orientation.

However, a relatively large proportion of consumers report they are economizing on food purchases as a way of reducing living expenses. To these consumers, gardening may offer a way to obtain high quality food at low cost.

Consumers are getting more involved with food in the home, following a decade-long expansion of their eating-out options. This reflects a renewed emphasis on home and family and ongoing health/nutritional concerns.

Home-based leisure

Gardening will benefit from the renewed emphasis on home-based leisure. This will include all types of plant cultivation.

People are giving more thought to how they spend their leisure time and are trying to pursue more productive activities. Yet, leisure time is becoming more precious as it becomes more limited as a result of increased demands on time.

Further reinforcing the focus of leisure-time activities at home is the fact that people are staying in one place longer. Home aesthetics—both interior and exterior—are coming back as meaningful signs of being a "winner."

Lawn or garden signals success

More people associate a well-cared-for lawn or a beautiful garden with success.

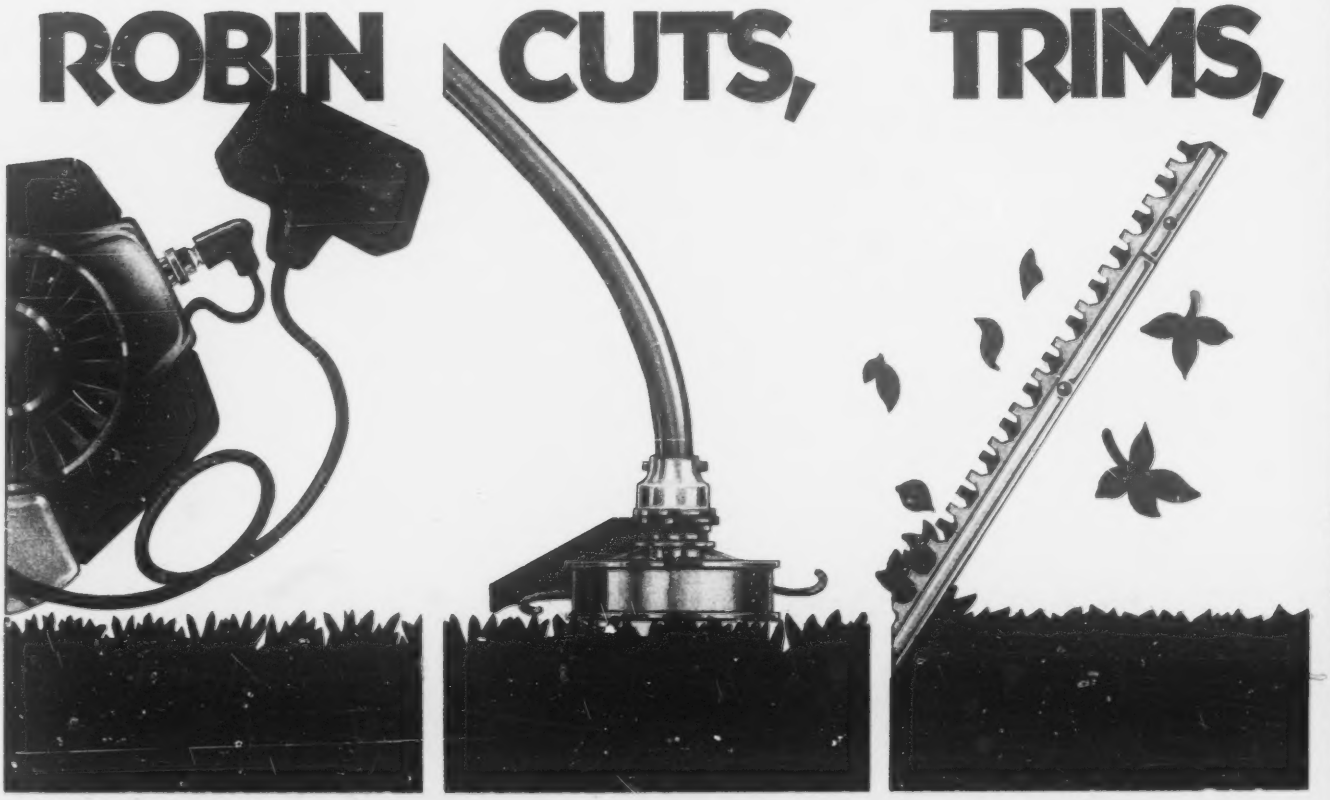

Table I
Time spent at home

	1985
Spent more time at home in 1985 compared to 1984	30%
Reasons for spending more time at home:	
To economize	32
To relax	32
More involved with home and how it looks	27
Need to spend more time on household chores	23
Engaging in more activities at home (e.g. home entertainment equipment)	13
Doing more entertaining	5

Source: January 1986, Yankelovich, Skelly, and White Inc., "How Changing Lifestyles in America are Impacting the Garden Industry." Based on 2,500 personal interviews.

Many report feelings of creativity from gardening. In this light, gardening may have a greater role as a way of relaxing and reducing stress as well as providing a fitness-oriented population with an avenue of exercise.

There is a strong involvement with physical fitness and well-being in America. Among all the vigorous activities of outside work including gardening, gardening leads the list. Almost half of consumers reported they participated in outside work at least twice a week, when weather permitted.

Thirty percent of persons interviewed spent more time at home in 1985 compared to 1984. The three top reasons, in order of descending importance were to:

- economize;
- be more involved with home and how it looks; and
- relax. (See Table I.)

On many levels—education, income and certainly self-confidence—the boomers' generation is the cream of American society. It is a trend-setting generation because of its size, its values, and experience.

The enormous impact of boomers on the lawn and garden industry is just beginning to be felt. With the senior boomers now turning 40, they will dominate the lawn and garden retail market over the next decade. Over that same period of time, they will become the American Establishment: the senators and congressmen, company presidents and managers, investors, homeowners and civic leaders.

There is every reason to think that their values, lifestyles and attitudes will exert a powerful influence on all Americans. They have already reversed the away-from-home thrust of the '70s. Their "look good, feel good" lifestyle, preferences have affected virtually every consumer market.

As more of the boomers establish

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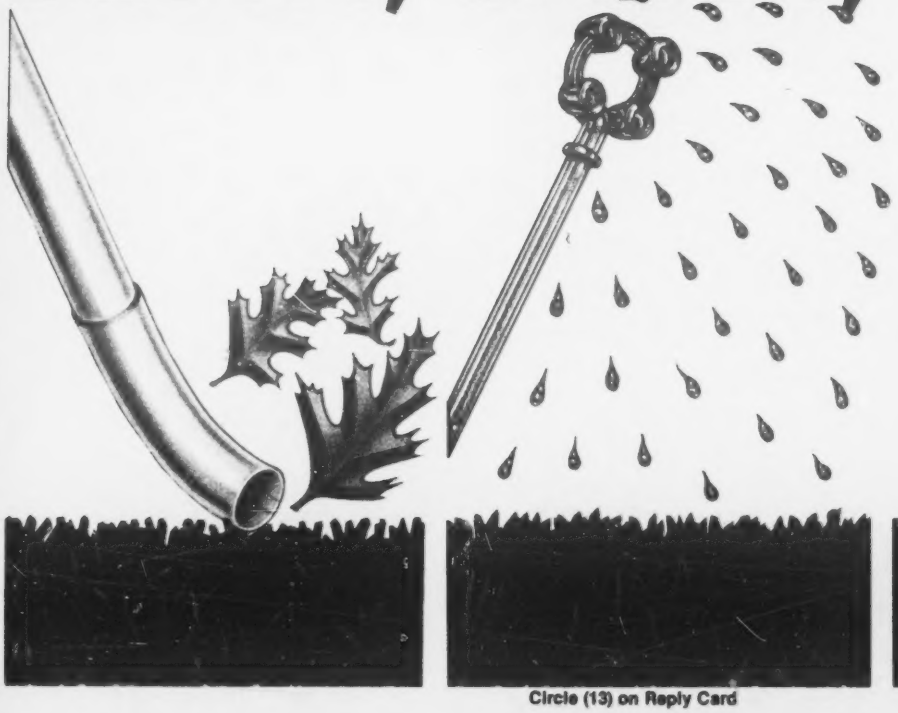
BLOWS, SPRAYS, LASTS.



Put the full line of Robin gasoline-powered outdoor equipment in your store and watch your sales take off.

Robin quality is unbeatable. So is our exclusive two year limited consumer warranty. It's the best in the business. Bar none.

For grass trimmers/brush cutters, blowers, sprayers, hedge trimmers and other outdoor power equipment, make your first choice the equipment that lasts: Robin.

Imported exclusively by Carswell Import & Marketing Associates, Inc. Call 919-767-9432. Or write us at P.O. Box 16221, Winston-Salem, NC 27115.

Robin

Circle (13) on Reply Card

Table II
Strategic shopper trends

	1983	1984	1985
Doing/considering to economize:			
Fewer impulse purchases	58%	53%	54%
Waiting to buy on sale	43	45	48
Shopping more at discount stores	42	44	46
Adhering more strictly to budget	27	36	36
Shopping less often	29	29	29
"'No name' or unbranded products are a real benefit to the consumer"	72	72	67

Source: January 1986, Yankelovich, Skelly, and White Inc., "How Changing Lifestyles in America are Impacting the Garden Industry." Based on 2,500 personal interviews.

Strategic

...continued

families and form new households, we may be seeing a heightened emphasis on family togetherness and a growing focus on making home a more elegant environment with abundant leisure-time opportunities.

The boomers display an emphasis on values and value-added components of life which go beyond "getting bargains" to lawn and garden activities that meet emotional needs, provide exercise needed to keep fit, supply fresh food, nurture the involvement of the whole family in at-home activities and provide a productive outlet for leisure time.

Marketing mandates

Boomers are providing the lawn and garden industry with the opportunity to adapt and respond to a powerful thrust of value-oriented pragmatism in the marketplace. This is not something which may happen in the future. According to some observers, its happening now.

"In every product line, prices are coming down and quality is up," says Walt Kopala, merchandise manager for Western Auto Supply Co. "The customer's got a helluva deal."

The consumer's new savvy and selectivity is not a short-term phenomenon, the study tells us. Rather, the strategic approach to the marketplace represented in boomers' attitudes and behaviors represents a basic shift to buying patterns that are likely to endure. (See Table II.)

This important lifestyle study recommends these marketing guidelines for businesses:

- Identify product value. (Cut through the clutter of price chops and brand name claims to identify real values, and communicate these to your customers.)
- Identify your assets and liabilities. (Look at brand or company name assets as well as liabilities. Help the consumer avoid trial and error purchases and be clear about product difference.)
- Identify new market niches. (Subsegments of the market are well worth targeting for their unique character or needs. Among these new niches are those sufficiently affluent and sizeable to warrant your attention. They are as reachable as the total market.)
- Be an efficient and effective marketer. (New media strategies for new and old products are indicated, as the reassessments of marketing budget allocations.)
- Identify new distribution opportunities. (More consumers want efficient purchase solutions, both in-home and at point-of-purchase. This suggests an opportunity for marketers to leverage new distribution opportunities, including those created by new technologies.)

Findings from the study suggest that the baby boom generation is becoming the key population segment for gardening as it moves into the prime gardening age. The strategic consumer has made quality the keystone of the smart shopper philosophy. Thus, there are advantages for those lawn and garden businesses that identify the value-added dimensions of their products and services. Retailers must tailor their marketing strategies to lifestyle preferences in order to effectively reach this new, pragmatic consumer. —LGM

Tested & Highly Rated Nationwide!

Finelawn 1 Turf Type Tall Fescue proved to be an extremely excellent lawn seed. Its bountiful green color and attractive, narrow tapering leaves were judged high quality. Plus Finelawn 1 demonstrated significant resistance to heat, drought and disease. Tested beauty and toughness -- it's what makes Finelawn 1 an outstanding choice for home lawns, commercial lawns and recreational facilities.

Finelawn 1
TURF TYPE TALL FESCUE

Available at your local Lawn Seed Dealer.

Circle (14) on Reply Card

'86 spring ad plans

Retailers select ad times and media for maximum value. This spring, March Saturdays are the most popular kickoff dates and newspapers the most popular medium.

By Kathleen Armentrout

For most retailers, advertising is tailored to meet their specific needs. The spring season is especially important to lawn and garden retailers so the timing and effective use of advertising is vital at this time of year.

One Colorado retailer is taking advantage of an unusual weather phenomenon. Facing the warmest January in years, Jon Dunnell, garden center manager for McGuckin Hardware, Boulder, Colo., began promoting spring products in mid-January rather than in March as usual.

Although he says it is too early to hit consumers with spring products such as lawnmowers, the warm weather does encourage sales of fertilizers, mulches and soil supplements, as well as other early spring products.

"We keep our garden center running year round," Dunnell says. "It really thrives, though, from about March through October." As a result, Dunnell says he usually receives his early shipments of spring products about Feb. 15 and begins advertising the products about March 1. The warm weather this year made the timing good for earlier advertising.

In a fall 1985 *LGM* survey of retailers, 38 percent of respondents indicated plans to start spring newspaper advertising in March. Regional factors appeared to have a slight influence on the start of spring advertising with 28 percent of the retailers in the Northeast, 49 percent of retailers in the North Central, 38 percent in the South and 28 percent in the West indicating March starting dates. In the West, another 28 percent said they planned to start spring advertising as early as February.

Even fewer differences were apparent between classes of retailers. While 46 percent of multi-department stores chose March to start spring advertising, 39 percent of garden centers and of power equipment dealers chose March start dates. Almost 35 percent of hardware/home centers planned campaigns beginning in March.

Retailers showed less agreement in the particular day chosen to kick off spring sales. Overall, Saturday and Thursday were the most popular. More retailers in the South and West chose to start on Saturday while in the North Central, Thursday was the most popular. Retailers in the Northeast were evenly divided between Thursday and Saturday as the most popular.

"Timing of ads is important," said one Virginia retailer. "We try to carry a different mix of merchandise than our competitors with a trend toward better quality and higher-priced merchandise."

Dunnell agrees and says knowledge and quality bring customers back to his store. The garden department of his store has five knowledgeable employees, including one with a degree in environmental biology to answer chemical questions, plus Dunnell who has experience in landscaping.

Other garden centers agree that quality and knowledge improve their sales. "Home Club, Price Club, Home Depot and Target's loss leader features bring people to their stores," says Diana Hagelburg, garden center manager for Buena Park Lumber, Buena Park, Calif. "Quality and service bring them back to me."

Other retailers agree that mass merchandisers force independent retailers to be more aggressive in their marketing. "With mass merchandisers handling lawn and garden supplies, today's independent retailer must become better prepared to display and promote products more aggressively," says a Mississippi garden center manager.

Barbara Scherer of Garden Center Inc., Richmond, Ind., feels frustrated by consumers' reactions to mass merchandiser advertising. "They (customers) come in and pick our brains then go and buy from K mart," she says. "And they pay more for a lot of stuff there."

Because of difficulties with the local newspaper, Scherer says her company has pulled its advertising and the weekly gardening column she had been writing for the paper. In addition, a weak local economy has had an adverse effect on sales.

Sales of garden supplies have dropped

MARCH
S M T W T F S
1
2 3 4 5 6 7 8
9 10 11 12 13 14
16 17 18 19 20 21 22
23 24 25 26 27 28 29
30 31
Sat
By far, March will be the most popular month for kicking off spring ad campaigns. Saturday will be the most popular day according to:
• 21 percent of garden centers;
• 17 percent of OPE dealers
• 13 percent of hardware/home centers; and
• 17 percent overall.
Source: 1985 LGM survey

Daily Gazette

Daily newspapers will represent the major advertising buy for:

- 56 percent of garden centers;
- 49 percent of power equipment dealers;
- 32 percent of hardware/home centers;
- 31 percent of multi-department stores; and
- 46 percent involved in the lawn and garden industry overall.

Weekly or bi-weekly newspapers rate second, direct mail third, radio fourth, local television fifth and billboard advertising sixth as spring season media purchases.

Source: 1985 *LGM* survey

80 percent in six years she says. Their pet supply business has helped keep them solvent. In midsummer, GC Inc. did a garden supply inventory to decide whether or not to order for spring. They did choose to place a conservative order, but now it is a matter of being able to sell the products.

For Scherer that means alternate forms of advertising. On a small computer, Jim Scherer has developed a mailing list of 1,500 customers. Currently the list includes mostly pet supply customers but is expanding to include garden supply buyers. With the local economy affected by high unemployment and shaky industry, the Scherers think the monthly mailing is their most effective advertising.

"We get to feeling we're a really isolated case, and *we* must be doing something wrong," Barbara Scherer says. "But we talk to our horticulture suppliers, and they say for several years it's been bad. We aren't alone."

Other retailers—even those not facing economic difficulties—also think direct mail advertising is the most practical way to reach customers. "We carry all of these (chemicals, fertilizers, garden tools, walk-behind mowers, lawn tractors and riders and tillers) but found flyers sent to each mailbox do us more good than newspapers, television or radio," says one Maine garden center owner.

Although overall retailers reported dai-

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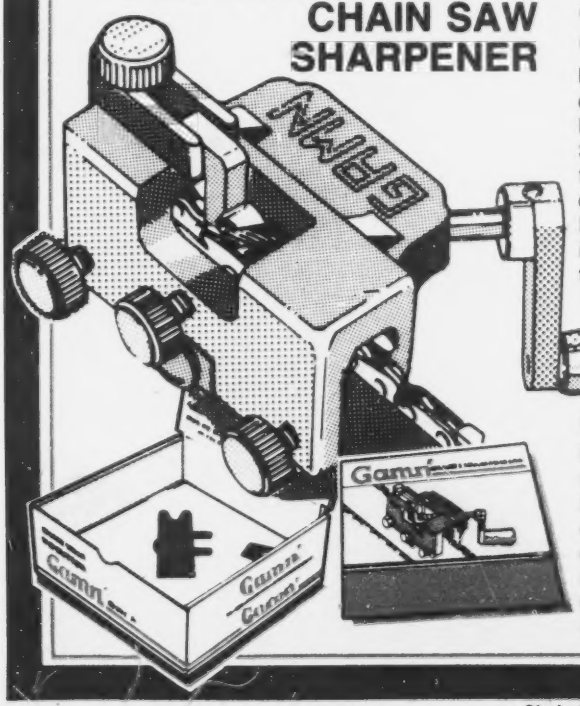
Gamn'

CHAIN SAW SHARPENER



BUILT TO SELL

GAMN' FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS

Now chain saw users can enjoy top saw performance, hour after hour. The Gamn' Sharpener is THE effective tool for precise restoration of chain cutting efficiency. Professional loggers and do-it-yourselfers agree. Even on the job it takes just a few minutes—for professional results.

GAMN' FOR YOU

Build incremental sales, solid margins, and, most of all, satisfied saw and chain customers with the Gamn' Sharpener. You'll know you're offering a useful high quality tool. Customer-to-customer referrals confirm it.

GAMN' DEALER NETWORK

Our introductory cartons will enable you to join our dealer network with a minimum inventory investment. On quantities or multiples of 12 sharpeners, we will pay U.P.S. ground freight to any point in the continental U.S.A. For more information about building incremental sales and satisfied customers, call today. We're stocked for immediate shipment.

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Indiana 1-812-867-6469

Gamn'

11427 DARMSTADT ROAD
EVANSVILLE, IN 47711

Circle (19) on Reply Card

"Most important, inventory financing gave us the opportunity to diversify into a new business."

Eugene McLean
Allan Lawn Mower Co.

As an industry service, Borg-Warner asked Eugene McLean to address the idea that Floor Planning can be a tool for planning ahead.

Since 1947, Allan Lawn Mower Co. has been a family operated store serving western Massachusetts. Since Don and Eugene have taken over their father's operation, the company has grown steadily each year, with the McLeans expecting 1985 growth of up to 18%. The operation maintains between $500,000-$800,000 of inventory, with annual sales generally averaging $2½ million.

Having grown to become perhaps the largest lawn mower retailer in the area, both Don and Eugene feel that inventory financing has helped their company's growth, as well as the recent expansion into the distribution business, opening EDM Distributors.

Eugene McLean –The Lawn & Garden business is a highly seasonal one, but also based largely on impulse purchase. For the most part, customers see what they want on the floor and want to walk off with it. Other dealers know that if you don't have it on the floor or in stock, you're not going to sell it.

For that reason, inventory financing has been crucial. Our floor planning allows us to maintain wide selections of stock to meet customer tastes and needs, but it *also* allows us to keep sufficient back-up stock to support turns. This plus our diversity of product lines has enhanced our reputation as a customer/service oriented operation.

Perhaps *most* important, however, has been the opportunity for growth that we have utilized because of inventory financing, substantial credit lines available through floor planning and flexible payment terms, working together. Our recent expansion into the wholesale business simply wouldn't have been possible without floor planning. It not only funded the distributorship's merchandise, but also freed-up our own cash flow to use in making the new business grow.

Prior to floor planning, the company was often forced to borrow money from local banks to keep afloat through winter slack time. Recently, however, inventory financing has afforded us sufficient cash flow to meet daily expenses year 'round. Since using inventory financing, we've never had to borrow from the bank to get us through a season.

FLOOR PLANNING AHEAD

An Industry Service Message From
Borg-Warner Financial Services
Circle (21) on Reply Card

Advertising
...continued

ly newspapers were their major advertising media, 37 percent of hardware/home centers reported the major advertising expense was for direct mail.

A direct mail circular program supplemented with weekly newspaper ads is used by Sutter Home Center, Berwick, Pa., according to general manager Larue Slusser.

Sutter starts its circular program in early April with 60 percent of the emphasis going to lawn and garden products. "The activity really starts with the warm weather about that time," Slusser says. The home center is placing more emphasis on lawn and garden with its increased outdoor storage area and the ability to provide a wider product mix. "Our advertising increases sales and increases store traffic."

Retailers choose newspapers

However, according to the fall survey, most retailers choose daily newspapers as their major advertising medium.

More than 46 percent of all retailers and 56 percent of garden centers said the major part of their advertising budgets is spent for daily newspaper advertising.

Dunnell says McGuckin advertises at least once a week in the daily paper but emphasizes products rather than brands. "We use the brand name to draw in customers, not to push one type," he says. Co-op ads also play a part in the campaigns, and the company's advertising department stays current on opportunities.

Dunnell says placement of the ad is also important. McGuckin has found placement in the sports section, especially in the fall, is particularly effective. Coupons help monitor the effectiveness of his newspaper ads. To measure the effectiveness of radio ads, he relies on calls and comments from customers.

In the survey, radio ranked first as a supplemental advertising medium. Almost 29 percent of respondents said they would use radio advertising, while 19 percent said they would use weekly or biweekly newspapers and also 19 percent said they would use direct mail to supplement their major campaigns.

Variety of products featured

According to retailers, a variety of products will be featured in spring advertising. Overall, 57 percent will feature walk-behind mowers, and 47 percent will include lawn tractors and riders. Tillers will be featured by 42 percent.

About 40 percent of respondents said fertilizers are included, while 39 percent include chemicals. For 32 percent, garden tools are in the advertising plans.

When divided by classification of retailers, the figures break down a little differently. Almost 80 percent of garden centers say fertilizers figure in their advertising plans, and 75 percent include chemicals. About 49 percent plan to feature garden tools.

On the other hand, 65 percent of hardware/home centers plan to feature walk-behind mowers and 64 percent highlight chemicals. Almost 63 percent will feature fertilizers and the same percentage garden tools.

Obviously, power equipment dealers place almost exclusive emphasis on walk-behind mowers (81 percent), lawn tractors and riders (79 percent) and tillers (67 percent) according to the survey.

Retailers reported median advertising expenses ranged from 3 to 5 percent of sales.

Overall, retailers indicated effective advertising was the key to projecting products and knowledge, as well as prices. But most retailers indicated advertising alone was not enough. "Competition is growing steadily, requiring increases in efforts toward marketing. Strategy includes increasing services," says a Missouri garden center.

Dunnell says McGuckin and other retailers have to take advantage of opportunities. "If we just get them in the store, we can sell them." **—LGM**

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As a free service for our readers, we forward your inquiry to the product's manufacturer. Reader Service Card is pre-addressed.

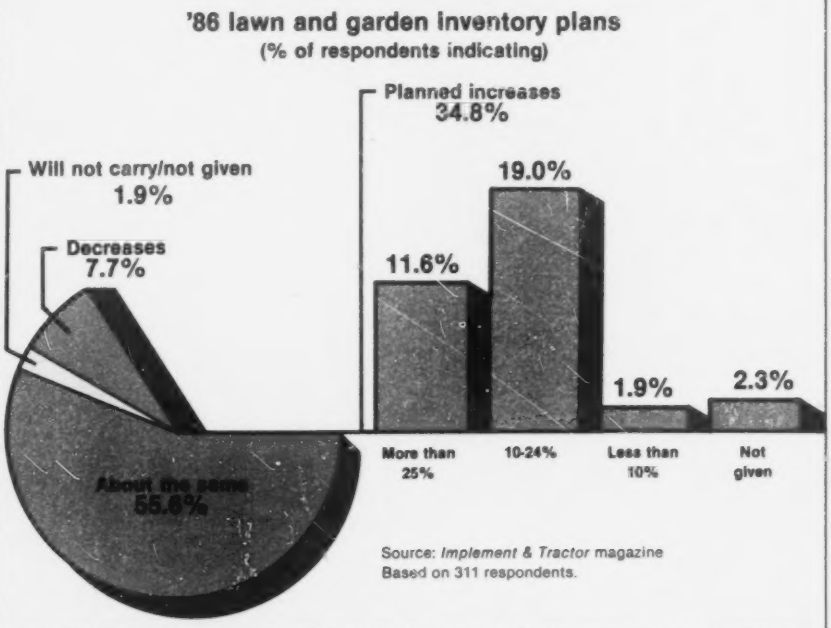
Power Equipment Report

Farm dealers deeper into lawn and garden

Perhaps due to the poor farm economy, farm equipment dealers are making significant moves into the lawn and garden industry, according to a survey by *Implement & Tractor* magazine.

More than 33 percent of the 311 retailers surveyed indicated their inventories of lawn and garden products were larger in 1985 than in 1984. Almost 47 percent said inventories remained the same, and 17 percent said they were smaller. Those inventories included lawn and garden tractors and attachments, riding mowers, walk-behinds, tillers, snowblowers and trimmers.

Retailers also reported plans to increase lawn and garden inventories in 1986. Almost 11 percent said they planned increases of more than 25 percent, while 19 percent indicated planned increases of between 10 and 25 percent. Overall, 35 percent reported planned increases of lawn and garden product inventories.



Sales volumes also reflect a stronger interest in lawn and garden products by farm equipment dealers. About 42 percent said sales in 1985 were higher than in 1984. Almost 33 percent reported sales remained about the same, and 22 percent said they were down. Less than 3 percent did not carry lawn and garden products in 1985.

Gilson receives Ford outstanding supplier award

Gilson Brothers Co. received a Ford Tractor Operations outstanding supplier award for 1985. Only two such awards were presented out of 500 suppliers.

The basis for the award was a combination of outstanding product quality, engineering excellence and on-time delivery. Gilson supplies Ford Tractor Operations with a complete line of tractors, mowers, tillers, snowthrowers, log-splitters, heaters and commercial mowing equipment.

Porter Brothers acquires two companies

Porter Brothers Inc. has purchased Princess Anne Power Equipment Co. and Grower's Lawn and Garden Inc.

Princess Anne is an outdoor power equipment distributorship serving the Tidewater area of Virginia and eastern North Carolina. Grower's, Bluffton, S.C., is a turf equipment and supply company that serves the Hilton Head and coastal South Carolina areas.

Porter Brothers, Shelby, N.C., serves more than 3,500 customers in the Carolinas, Virginia, West Virginia and eastern Tennessee.

Briefs

• Bill Rousar, executive secretary of the Engine Service Assn., retired in October. He and others were responsible for the creation and development of ESA. Delores Morris replaced Rousar as executive secretary.

• Sensation Power Equipment Division, Gilson Brothers Co., is offering a comprehensive four-point credit program. The highlight of the program is a 90-day no interest, no payment feature. If the customer pays off the unit before the end of the period, he will not pay any interest. A finance charge ceiling for the program has been set at 18 percent per year.

• The American National Standards Institute has available for distribution copies of the ANSI B175.1-1985 American National Standard for power tools—Gasoline-Powered Chainsaws—Safety Requirements. Copies can be obtained by contacting the American National Standards Institute Inc., 1430 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, Attn: Sales Department.

• Mark A. Robideaux has joined the staff at Minnesota Stihl Inc. as manager of accounting.

• Jerry Stumbras has joined Lawn-Boy/Ryan as the corporate vice president and general manager of the Outdoor Power Equipment Group. He is responsible for all engineering, manufacturing and marketing functions. Stumbras was formerly group vice president, marketing, for Roper Outdoor Power Equipment.

• Murray Bender, vice president of sales and managing director of Murray Export Sales B.V., retired Feb. 1.

• Briggs & Stratton, Milwaukee, has been honored by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. The corporation was recognized for the development of new technology with regard to innovative application. The OilGard system, a mechanism that automatically stops the engine when the oil level drops too low, received the award.

• Joel Anthony Casoria has been named co-op advertising manager for Snapper Power Equipment, McDonough, Ga.

• Roper Corp.'s board of directors elected Wayne Harris as vice president of sales and marketing. In this capacity Harris will be responsible for the overall sales and marketing efforts.